

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are pending in the application.

Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Official Action of November 3, 2005, claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over PARKER et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,451,075) in view of HANSEN et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,452,913). Further, the Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over PARKER in view of HANSEN, as applied to claims 1 and 3, and further in view of DAVIS et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,942,243). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

While Applicant does not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection, nevertheless, independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define a structural feature of an embodiment and to more clearly distinguish over the applied prior art references by further reciting the flange portion extending along an edge of the airbag opening. No new matter is introduced by the present amendment. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is directed to, inter alia, Figs. 5-6 of Applicant's application.

It is a feature of an embodiment to provide an air bag door structure for an automobile capable of preventing damage to a cushion and injury to a worker upon an assembly operation by forming a reinforcing part by bending an edge portion of the air bag door.

To achieve the above-noted feature, a disclosed embodiment of an air bag structure for an automobile, as recited in amended claim 1, includes, inter alia, a skin layer providing a surface of an instrument panel and having an incision groove provided at a bottom surface of the skin layer, a foam resin provided at the rear surface of the skin layer, a center piece provided at an inner side of the foam resin and having an airbag opening, at which a core contacts the bottom surface of the center piece, and an air bag door mounted in the air bag opening of the center piece. Further, a flange portion extends toward the incision groove of the skin layer and is provided at an end portion of the air bag door. Furthermore, the flange portion extends along an edge of the airbag opening, and a hemming part is formed by bending the end portion of the flange portion to one side.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references relied upon in the rejections under 35U.S.C. §103(a) do not disclose such a combination of features, particularly, the airbag door 110 having a flange portion 114 extending along an edge of the airbag opening 119.

On the contrary, in the PARKER reference, the flange portion extends along a center of the airbag opening, as noted by the Examiner. Thus, PARKER does not disclose an airbag door having a flange portion extending along an edge of the airbag opening, as recited in amended claim 1. Neither HANSEN nor DAVIS discloses the above-noted features of the disclosed embodiment.

Further, the flange in PARKER extends parallel to the door, while the flange of the disclosed embodiment extends towards the incision groove.

The Examiner also acknowledges that PARKER fails to disclose a hemming part, much less the hemming part being between 2 to 6 mm, and appears to attempt to supply the deficiencies of PARKER by citing the teachings of HANSEN and Davis.

However, Applicant submits that the Examiner has not presented sufficient motivation for the proposed modifications, and that the only reason to combine the teachings of the applied prior art results from a review of Applicant's disclosure and the application of impermissible hindsight. Applicant further submits that even if the PARKER device were modified as proposed by the Examiner, the claimed invention would still not result from such combination.

Thus, even assuming, arguendo, that the teachings of PARKER and HANSEN or PARKER, HANSEN and DAVIS can be properly combined, the asserted combinations of the applied references would not result in the embodiment as recited in claim 1.

Thus, the rejection of independent claim 1, and of claims 2-4 dependent thereon under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper for at least these reasons, and withdrawal of such rejection is respectfully requested.

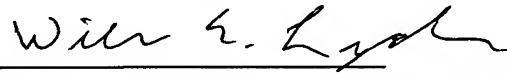
Independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance in view of the amendments and the above-noted remarks. Dependent claims 2-4 are also submitted to be in condition for allowance in view of their dependence from the allowable base claim and also at least based upon their recitations of additional features of the present invention. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the rejections under 35 U.S.C.103(a) be withdrawn and that an early indication of the allowance thereof be given.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to be attached thereto.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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